

REMARKS

The Examiner's communication dated September 19, 2008 has been received and carefully considered. In conformance with the applicable statutory requirements, this paper constitutes a complete reply and/or bona fide attempt to advance the application to allowance. Specifically, claims 54, 55, 68, 73, 76, 77 and 79 have been amended. Claims 57 and 72 have been cancelled. In addition, detailed arguments in support of patentability are presented. Reexamination and/or reconsideration of the application as amended are respectfully requested.

Summary of Office Action

Claims 33, 53, 58-61, 63, 64, 72-74, 43, 70, 46, 62, 67, 80-81, 49, 71, 78 and 50 are allowed.

Claims 54, 55, 72-74, 57, 68, 76, 77 and 79 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

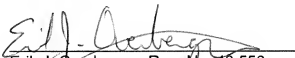
The claims have been carefully amended to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejections applied by the Examiner. In particular, claims 54, 55, 68, 73 and 76 have been amended to correct antecedent basis with respect to the base ring and/or the split. Claims 57 and 72 have been cancelled. Claim 77 has been amended such that it is not directed to a specie mutually exclusive of the specie of its base claim, i.e., claim 46. Claim 79 has been amended such that it does not merely contain duplicative language of its base claim, i.e., claim 46.

CONCLUSION

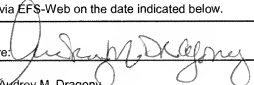
All formal and informal matters having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. It is believed that the claim changes clearly place the application in condition for allowance. Alternatively, if the Examiner is of the view that the application is not in clear condition for allowance, it is requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned for purposes of conducting a telephone interview to resolve any outstanding differences. Accordingly, an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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October 30, 2008
Date

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